

118
THE
Dean of *Winchester*
HIS
CHARACTER
OF THE
English CLERGY.

BEING
A Translation of a LATIN SERMON
Preached before the CONVOCATION

On the 2d of *December* last,

By *Zachary Pearce*, S. T. P. Dean of *Winchester*. ✓

WITH A
DEDICATION to the AUTHOR,
CONTAINING
Some REMARKS on the unjust Aspersions cast upon
his BRETHREN therein, and other Notorious
Particulars.

By a MEMBER of the LOWER HOUSE
of CONVOCATION.

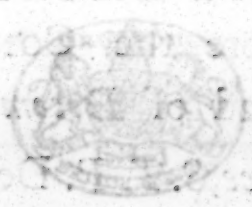
And damn for Arts by which himself did rise. POPE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. COOPER, at the Globe in *Pater-*
Noster-Row. MDCCXLII.

THE
Dean of Winchester
HIS
CHARACTER
OF THE
BISHOP OF CROFT.

A Translation of a Latin Sermon
Preached at the Convocation
On the 11th of December 1711.
By Zachary Pearce, D.D. Canon of the said
Winchester.



DEDICATION to the Author
CONTAINING
Some Observations on the Author's
Style, and on the Subject of the
Sermon.

By the Author.

Printed by J. Sturges, at the Foot of St. Dunstons Church, in Fleet-Street.

LONDON:
Printed by J. Sturges, at the Foot of St. Dunstons Church, in Fleet-Street.



T O

Zachary Pearce, S.T.P.

Dean of *Winchester*.

REV. SIR,



HAVE long and ardently wished for a fair Opportunity of writing to you, and, Dedicator-like, telling you what I myself and the rest of the World think of you. But when I reflected upon either the Profundity of your Erudition, or the Sublimity of your Modesty, I despaired of producing any thing that I durst approach you with. However at last, Sir, I have fortunately met with a Piece that I may venture to pronounce truly worthy of you ; nay, I may be bold to say, that no Person in the World, but yourself, could be worthy of It. Both the Obstacles, then, abovementioned are vanished at once. For as your Learning cannot but approve of its own Production, so your Modesty, Sir, will not be in the least affected, I assure you, by what I shall say to you upon this Occasion.

As I am informed, Sir, by some who know you well, that you are a very great Friend to

6 DEDICATION.

Stories, I'll entertain you with a short one relating to the Manner of this Performance coming under my Inspection. I was unfortunately called off by a melancholy Occasion from attending you at *St. Paul's*, as I fully purposed, when you delivered the ensuing Oration ; but upon coming to Town last Week, I happened to fall into a pretty large Company one Evening, where two or three more of our Brethren were present. A pert young *Templer*, who had thrust himself in amongst us, took occasion to *smoak the Parsons* (as they term it) and tho' frequently rebuked, could not be prevailed on to drop his Rallery. Upon this, an elderly Gentleman who sat next him, laid down his Pipe, took our Spark by the Hand, and insisted upon leading him out of the Room; telling him, That it was an insufferable Breach of all the Rules, both of Decency and good Fellowship, to throw out Reflections upon a particular Body of Men, when any of the Members of such a Body were present; and that therefore if he were to be treated according to his Demerit, he should be *kicked* out of the Room, instead of *banded* out of it. Dear Sir, cried the *Templer*, I have not said one Word of those Gentlemen of the Crape, but what a learned and dignified Branch of their own Stock said of them to their Faces before a Thousand in Company. Here Sir, continued he, pray cast your Eye upon these Pages of the Dean of *Winchester's* Sermon before the Convocation, and then judge if I had not sufficient Authority

rity for the Worst I could utter. The elderly Gentleman having comply'd with his Request, and perused the Passages he pointed out to him, returned the Youngster his Pamphlet, desired him to sit down again, took his own Place and Pipe as before, and after a long Whiff, replied - - - " Why the Dean of "*Winchester* knows best indeed, and so I'll have " no more to do in the Matter. The Subject was then changed ; however at parting, I requested the young Gentleman to gratify the Curiosity I had of incontinently perusing so remarkable a Performance, asking him at the same Time, how a Production of the Sermon-kind had happened to fall into his Hands, he seeming of too volatile a Cast to give much Attention to things of that serious Nature. - - - Troth Sir, says he, I was told that it roasted your whole Fraternity so confoundedly, that I could not resist the Desire I had of seeing you lash one another.

No sooner was I got Home, but I immediately commenced your Reader, Sir ; fully satisfied in myself, that, however I might approve of the Subject, or your Manner of treating it, I could not fail being entertained with the Diction, and that so renown'd a Critick, and so learned an Editor, must surely cloath his Offspring in an elegant Dress. But alas, how barbarously was I disappointed ! when I found it trick'd out in a Merry-*Andrew's* Coat, of Shreds and Patches, injudiciously collected from Lexicons and Indexes,

Indexes, and most Absurdly and Finically stitched together. I hurried on, Heaven knows, from Page to Page, and thought verily I must meet with something by and by; but, like *Wittoll* in the Play, I found nothing at last, but what was to my Loss. Such quaint Antithesis's, such profound Anticlimaxes, such false Cases, such misapply'd Phrases; in a Word, such a Completion of every Rule in the *Bathos*, as could never come from the Editor of *Longinus's Sublime*. I must therefore beg Leave to presume Sir, that you either gave this Discourse in *English* to some Stripling at School, to do into *Latin* for you; or that some modest Critick at the University bestowed that Edition of *Longinus* upon you to usher into Publick for him. But as I am willing to take the favourable side, I conclude the first to have been the Case.

I therefore, Sir, thought proper to give it the Publick in its native Garb, in doing of which I have kept as close to my Original as possible, and endeavoured to preserve both the Spirit and Letter of it. If it should appear therefore to the *English* Reader to be bald, low, vapid, unintelligible Jargon, let him know that I am not Master of the Chymist's Elixir for the turning of Brass into Gold.

I shall not then trouble either you, Sir, or the Publick with a particular Criticism on the innumerable Errors in the *Latin*, or rather *No Latin*; (for this would be entering

ing upon an *Herculean* Labour, and I am in no Humour at present for cleaning of Stables;) but shall without farther Preface make a few Remarks on some Passages in it, as it now appears in *English*.

You begin, Sir, with saying, "that you was long in Dispute with yourself, what to produce worthy of the Expectation of the Right Reverend Fathers, and the Reverend Brethren present." Now, Sir, you need not have been in the least Pain about that, for I dare believe their Expectation was so very moderate, that it was mighty easily to be answer. You go on to say, "that if you had chosen to have taken your Matter from the Nature and Business of the approaching Sessions of Convocation, many suitable Heads of Discourse would have occurred to you." But, dear Mr Dean, why did you not chuse it then? why, like the Heathen Witch of old, did you cry out, *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*, I know and approve of better things, but chuse to practise the worser? Why, instead of explaining and enforcing the Synodical Duty to those who were convened in Synod, did you chuse to take an Opportunity of bespattering and scandalizing their whole Body? for that not one of them escapes your Lash in some Respect or other, I shall make appear by and by. Your Reason for not chusing the Former, was, *because it was to be a Business of a very short*
B
Duration.

Duration. A decent Sneer enough upon the Convocation's not being permitted to sit, and very proper certainly to be thrown out upon the Assembly you was speaking to !

I shall take Notice of but one Passage in the first Part of your Discourse, the rest being innocent enough, except in its Barbarity to the *Latin* Tongue. Speaking of *Timothy* and *Titus* having received from *St. Paul* the Power of Imposition of Hands, Excommunication, Inspection into the Conduct of the inferior Clergy, and of assigning them Appointments according to their respective Merits, you conclude with asking, " what was wanting, " to any who held such Rights, of the Present " Authority which Bishops exercise over their " Clergy ? " Perhaps so : but other Rights were wanting to them, which our learned Bench enjoy at present ; and, I fancy, esteem the most valuable belonging to their Order : Namely, the *Right* of VOTING, and the *Right* of being TRANSLATED.

In the second Part of your Discourse, you make grievous Complaint, Sir, " that it is the " Custom of too many of the present Clergy " to dwell constantly upon moral Subjects in " their Sermons, and to talk of nothing in the " Pulpit but Benevolence, Justice, Gratitude, " Temperance, and such kind of Stuff; drawing their Doctrines from the *Greek* and *Latin* Philosophers more than from the Holy " Scriptures, and using such Arguments and " Expe-

“ Expressions, as would make People think
 “ they were hearing a *Crysippus*, or a *Panætius*
 “ only.” For shame! for shame! Mr. Dean.
 What! condemn your Brethren for preaching
 up Virtue and Morality? What! cast a male-
 volent and profane Asperision upon the Holy
 Scriptures, as if those sacred Writings did not
 supply them with such Topicks, but they must
 go to the Heathen Philosophers for ’em! What
 a Sword is here put into the Hands of our
 Infidel Opposers! Nay, what Infidel from
Julian the Apostate’s Time down to *Tindal*
 and *Woolston*, was ever shameless enough to
 broach such an Insinuation?

Well, but let us see what the Subjects are
 which Mr. Dean thinks the most proper for
 his Brethren of the Clergy to dwell upon;
 Why, “ the Mysteries and peculiar Doctrines
 “ of the Christian Faith, such as, those of the
 “ Trinity, the Incarnation, the miraculous
 “ Union of two distinct Natures in Christ, of
 “ Justification, of the Satisfaction made to God
 “ for us by the Blood of Christ, &c. &c. If you
 “ hear a Man, you say, preaching up these and
 “ such like Doctrines as these, which princi-
 “ pally distinguish the Christian Pastor from
 “ one whose sole Rule of Life is Reason, you
 “ readily acknowledge him to be a true Ex-
 “ pounder of the Gospel. These are the
 “ Things, you say, which ought most fre-
 “ quently to be poured into the Ears, or rather
 “ imprinted on the Minds of our Audiences.

You are surely the First, Mr. Dean, who ever blamed the Clergy for not insisting enough upon Topicks of that Nature; daily and hourly are they blamed by others for busying themselves too much in that Respect: For why? A Preacher is not always to be supposed speaking to Infidels and Hereticks; a Christian Congregation is, for the generality, well grounded in the Christian Faith, as you yourself acknowledge in the preceding Page, where you say, "That our Auditors, from their Infancy, have given their Assent to all the *Credenda* contained in the Scriptures." But can we say, that from their Infancy they have practised all the moral Duties enjoined therein? By too sad Experience, alas! we must know the contrary. What then ought *most frequently*, Mr. Dean, to be *imprinted on their Minds*, Those Things which are Matters of Faith, and are already believed by them, or those Things which relate to Practice, and are but too seldom considered by them? I will venture to say, in your own elegant Phrase, *that it appears far more profitable never to be silent, with regard to what is so viciously neglected, than never to discourse upon what is so well known.*

I'll give you the Judgment, Sir, of two learned Archbishops in this Case. The great and good *Tillotson*, whom you yourself have canoniz'd in this very Discourse, observing "that the two great Causes of the Ruin of Men were Infidelity and want of Consideration,"

says,

says, " that those who disbelieve the Principles
 " of Religion, are but a very small Part of
 " Mankind, in Comparifon of those who pe-
 " rish for want of attending to the Conse-
 " quences of those Principles, and consider-
 " ing the notorious Inconsistency of their
 " Lives with their Belief." If the Archbishop
 be in the right, are the greater Part or the
 very small Part of Mankind to be the most
 frequently preach'd to, pray, Mr. Dean?

The present Archbishop of *Dublin*, in his
 Discourse upon Moderation, says, " That,
 " those Things which are not plain, in the
 " Holy Scriptures, are not necessary; that,
 " those Things which we cannot compre-
 " hend are no farther necessary than is reveal'd,
 " and that when Men go about to explain them,
 " they go about a Work they know not.

If so, is it more commendable, Mr. Dean,
 in the Clergy to dwell most upon those Things
 which they have the least Call to? If I might
 be allow'd to appear in such great Company, I
 would venture to say to you, Sir, with regard
 to preaching, something to the same Purpose
 with what our Saviour said to the *Pharisees*
 with regard to their great Exactness in *paying*
Tyte of Mint and Annise and Cummin, whilst
they omitted the weightier Matters of the Law,
Judgment and Mercy; That those weightier
 Matters of the Gospel, its divine Morals, ought
 most frequently to be inculcated by its Priests;
 and the other Particulars, like those of *Annise*
 and *Cummin*, not to be left unhandled.

In

14 DEDICATION.

In Page 35 you are again upon the Backs
 “ of your Brethren, for making too liberal
 “ Concessions to Infidels, and, in order to allure
 “ them over to Christianity, giving up, in a
 “ great measure, Christianity itself, and put-
 “ ting a false Face upon it; for why, you
 “ ask, do you hear many amongst them al-
 “ lowing the Possibility of Hell Torments not
 “ being eternal, and other things of the like
 “ Nature?” Out of thy own Mouth will I an-
 swer thee. Just, before in the very same Page,
 you ask, “ what was the Reason that St. *Paul*
 “ insisted so much upon Justification by Faith,
 “ but St. *James* as much upon Justification
 “ by Works: Why truly, that they endea-
 “ vour’d, you say, to accommodate their Dis-
 “ courses for the Benefit of those to whom
 “ they were deliver’d.” If you will allow
 then, Mr. Dean, that these two great Apostles,
 whom you affirm to have been *both of the*
same Opinion, might very prudently and just-
 ly enforce such different, if not contrary
 Doctrines, with regard to so fundamental a
 Point, only to render their Discourses more
 suitable to those they were deliver’d to, why
 will you not allow the present Clergy to make
 some small Concessions to the Unbelievers a-
 mongst us, in order to reclaim them from
 their fatal Errors? For I think it is only com-
 mon Charity as well as Reason to conclude,
 that whenever they do make Concessions of
 that Nature, they do it with that good End
 in

in view. But Charity and Reason are Things which you have nothing to do with, it seems; nay, which you profess yourself an utter Enemy to throughout this Discourse. Now, I say, that by such a moderate and complying Conduct, not bearing upon the Edges, but steering in the Middle, we shall either reform the Adversary, or not: If we do, we obtain a considerable Victory, towards which it was worth while giving up a little; and if the contrary be the Case, we are but where we were; having no Reason to fear, as you cautiously apprehend, that they will be able to turn this Conduct of ours to our Disadvantage. But, Mr. Dean, as you positively affirm, in this Place, that These are not the proper Methods to be taken for the reclaiming of Infidels; why was not you so good as to inform us which were? As I conceive you deem it a Thing which ought to be attempted, 'tis a pity, methinks, when you set up for such a Dictator to the Brethren, but you had given them a little Insight how to behave in so arduous and nice a Part of their Duty! but you proceed, Sir, to a Topick you like better, which is that of Defamation.

The next Crime, then, which you accuse the Brethren of, is Non-Residence. This is a Practice I allow to be very culpable in many of us, but what think you of the Fountain whence it proceeds? Who are Those who set a too high Example for such Male-Conduct? Has a large Bishoprick, or a petty Village, the
most

most Right to complain of a Grievance of this Nature? O Mr. Dean, Mr. Dean! This was a Particular, which notwithstanding your boasted Freedom of Speech, you chose to be silent upon.

But let us examine a little what you say with Regard to this Charge of Non-Residence. Why, after expatiating upon it most pathetically, and uttering a most doleful Exclamation upon the Occasion, you are pleased to affirm, “that if we were to take a View of the
“ *Roman* Catholick Clergy in this Respect, we
“ should conclude Them to be the Reformed at
“ present, and that our Reformation was still to
“ come.” A blessed Compliment truly to the whole Body of the *English* Clergy, and for which, had the Convocation sat as formerly, it would no doubt have voted you an Address of Thanks! In the mean time you have the thanks, I assure you Mr Dean, of all the Popish Priests throughout the Kingdom.

Under the second Subdivision of the third Part of your Discourse you are greatly against the Clergy's appearing at publick Diversions, or indulging in Pleasures of any Kind, though never so innocent, which are not entirely suitable to the Gravity of their Function. You then descend to Particulars, and dissuade them
“ from frequenting Horse-Races, Play-Houses,
“ Musick Meetings, Taverns, &c. Pretty Instructions truly to be given from a Pulpit to the Right Reverend the Archbishop, the Bishops,

shops, and the other principal Clergy, assembled upon so solemn an Occasion. But the ghostly Advice you give them in this Respect is the most admirable of all admirable Things. Let it stand forth then, and speak for itself ;
 “ If my Brethren, say you, would hearken
 “ to me, they should so manage Matters, that
 “ if they must take a Diversion, or indulge
 “ in a lawful Pleasure now and then, it
 “ should appear to be accidental, and not as
 “ if they had sought after it, or voluntarily
 “ embraced it.”

What Pharisee ever taught or practised such a gross piece of Hypocrisy ! What Popish Priest ever countenanced such a monstrous Prevarication ?

So, Mr Dean, if I had a Mind to take a Glass with some Friends at a Tavern, I ought to intrust one of them with the Secreet, and get him to place himself at the Tavern Door, that, whilst I am in Appearance accidentally passing by that Way, he may seize upon me, and compel me to come in ; or if my Inclinations led me to partake of the Diversions of a Horse-Race, I should before-hand engage myself to dine with an Acquaintance at that Time, who happened to live upon the Frontiers of the Course, and who I was convinced would neither be absent himself, or permit me to be so. Or, what would be still better, suppose I had a House at the farther End of *Hampstead* Heath, why if I should be casu-
 C ally

ally laid hold of in my Passage home over that Place, at the Time of the Celebration of *Hampstead* Races, I might have a very just Excuse for being seen there, under Pretence of having been discharging my Morning Duty in Town.

The next Crime in your black List, for which you inveigh against the present Clergy of *England*, is their engaging in Civil Matters, and meddling too much with Affairs of State.

“ When you reflect, you say in Page 42,
 “ upon the Importance of our Duty, as set
 “ forth in Holy Writ, and in how solemn
 “ a Manner we all Promise at our Ordination
 “ to lay aside the Study of the World, you
 “ have no Patience with those who suffer
 “ themselves to be call’d off from their sacred
 “ Employment by Matters foreign thereunto;
 “ and you wish that in great Parishes it were
 “ made lawful for the Clergy to esteem every
 “ thing foreign to them which had not some
 “ Connection with the Cure of Souls.

All this, Mr Dean, is extreamly good, and I heartily wish the same in this Respect that you do; but, dear Sir, give me leave to ask you what Connection *the Modelling and Managing of a Select Vestry*, the interfering in *Covent Garden Elections*, the prohibiting the *Parish Bells being rung upon a publick Rejoicing for the glorious Atchievements of a Patriot Admiral*; what Connection, I say, Dr. *Pearce*, have these Things, and others like to these,

these, with the *Cure of Souls*? And yet, Sir, these Particulars have been practised very lately, if I am not misinformed, by a certain Friend of your's, who has a large Parish under his Care, and that, too, not without your Countenance. O but you allow, you'll say, that there may be sometimes an Excuse for this. True; but then you observe at the same Time, that very seldom such a one is made for it, as good Men can approve of. I am sure, Mr Dean, no Man good or bad, either could or did approve of the Practices I have been noting, nor was there a Possibility of any Excuse being made for them at all.

In the next Page (43) you severely rebuke those of the Clergy who "neglecting their
" own proper and more excellent Studies, engage in any other Art or Science for the
" Sake of Lucre, or for gaining the Favour
" of the Powerful and Wealthy," Dear Doctor, have you quite lost all Memory? or do you here, which I should much more marvel at, take Shame to yourself? Is it not well known, that you yourself rose by engaging in such Arts? The Reverend Mr. *Zachary Pearce* would scarce ever have been Mr. DEAN, I fancy, had he not applied himself to other Studies than that of Divinity. Have not you, Sir, been a professed Editor of profane Authors since you made that solemn Promise you mention at your Ordination, of *laying aside the Study of the World*? Did not

you employ yourself that way too in order to gain the Favour of the Powerful and Wealthy? Whence else that extraordinary Dedication, replete with the most gross and fulsome Adulation, which we find prefixed to your Edition of *Longinus*? Besides, Mr. Dean, you may be pleased to remember, that but a few Years are past since you employed a great deal of Pains, and many of those precious Hours which ought to have been dedicated to the proper Business of your sacred Function, in publishing a most curious Criticism on *Milton's* Poem of *Paradise lost*, and animadverting upon one put forth at that Time by another learned Doctor of Divinity. After all this, with what Face, Mr. Dean, could you possibly either preach or print what you have here said upon this Subject?

In Page 47 you say, "that if any one
" should think it was not altogether necessary
" that such Things should be said of the Cler-
" gy, let him look round and see how many are
" set over both Town and Country Parishes,
" who are infected with the Vices of the Age;"
and then, rising in Zeal, you charge home upon your Brethren, and brand many of them as guilty of the most flagrant Crimes. Let us see a Catalogue of them? Why, Ambition, Voluptuousness, Avarice, Wrath, Envy, Discord, Hatred, Simony, and the want of even the very Appearance of Sanctity.

In

In the next Page you say, " That there are
 " some amongst us, who are such Slaves to
 " Lust and Pleasure, that they are never named
 " by any one, but in order for some remark-
 " able Instance of Vice being produced in
 " them." And you are pleased to affirm,
 " That the present Growth of Infidelity is in
 " great Measure occasioned by the Immorali-
 " ty of the Clergy, and that those who bear
 " Arms against us, have hitherto proved in-
 " vincible through our Vices, and not through
 " the Strength of their own Arguments.

" These are the Things, you tell us, that you
 " had to say upon that Occasion." Pretty Things
 they are indeed, Mr. Dean, and very prettily
 and modestly said, and wonderfully suitable
 were they, both to the Occasion and to the Per-
 sons you were speaking to!

'Twas extremely judicious in you as well as
 kind, to stigmatize your Brethren so very frank-
 ly, and to tell them their own in so publick
 a Manner too. Tho' the Reason you give
 for doing it is a very extraordinary one; why,
 because the Archbishop was present, " who was
 " an Instance of its not being impossible in
 " the most iniquitous Times for a Man to
 " rise to the highest Dignity in the Church,
 " who had never been in one Particular want-
 " ing to his Duty." That this may be truly said
 of his GRACE I will readily allow, Mr.
 Dean; and will farther venture to affirm,
 from the Knowledge of his GRACE's singu-
 lar

lar Modesty and Candour, that he could take no Pleasure in either having this Truth said to his Face, or in having it said at all at other Men's Expence.

In the next Paragraph, Mr. Dean, you modestly place yourself in the Metropolitan Chair, and magisterially dictate to the Bishops themselves, telling them what People expected from them, and generously giving them Advice in what manner to discharge their Duty. A modest Undertaking enough, and as modestly executed ! But why that Sneer in this Place, where you call " the engaging in civil Affairs " the Pest of all Discipline ?

My good Lords the Bishops, as you well know, Sir, are called thereunto, in some Measure, from the very Nature of our compound Constitution; and therefore when you were expressly addressing yourself to those Right Reverend Personages, you ought surely to have been a little more tender in your Invectives against it. But where People have a strong Propensity to Sneering, and fancy they have a happy Talent at it too, they seldom can deny themselves the Gratification which any Opportunity seems to offer for indulging in it, however repugnant it may be to all good Breeding and Decorum.

The last Particular which I shall take Notice of, Sir, with regard to this extraordinary Discourse, is the *Authority* under which it appears in publick.

This

This has been the Cause of much Astonishment to many of our Brethren who have the highest Veneration for that wise, learned, and most excellent METROPOLITAN, by whose Command you tell us it was published; but in my Opinion this Particular may very readily be accounted for. His Grace of *Canterbury* is universally known to be one of the greatest Masters in the *Latin* Tongue, which any Age since that of MECENAS has produced; and as this Oration of yours is written in such *Latin* as no Age but that of W---E ever afforded a Specimen of, no Wonder if his GRACE did not, upon a single Hearing, apprehend the pernicious Purport of it, or that, trusting Mr. Dean had not deviated so widely from the Path of Right, he commanded, according to Custom, that the same should be printed.

I shall beg leave, Mr. Dean, to make use of your own Words in concluding this my Epistle Dedicatory, by “praying and beseeching you,
 “gentle Sir, to take that in good Part which I
 “have said with a benevolent Intention, altho’
 “with some what more Freedom of Speech.
 I am, Mr. Dean, with all due Respect,

Your most obedient

humble Servant

Ec. Ec. Ec.

This has been the cause of much Affliction
 great to many of our Brethren who have the
 highest Veneration for that wife, learned,
 and most excellent MATRONSITAN, by
 whose Command you tell us it was published;
 but in my Opinion this Particular may
 very readily be accounted for. His Grace of
 Devonshire, who is usually known to be one of
 the greatest Masters in the Latin Tongue,
 which may be seen that of Maccenas has
 produced; and the Order of yours is want-
 ing in such Letters as are of the Order of W-
 etc. attended a specimen of no Wonder if
 the French did not upon a single Reading
 find out the particular nature of it, or that
 seeing Mr. B. had not seemed to write
 from the List of Rights, he commanded it
 contrary to Custom that any more should be



A
TRANSLATION
OF A
LATIN SERMON

Preached before the CONVOCATION,
December 2, 1741.

By *Zachary Pearce, S. T. P. Dean of Winchester.*

Acts xx. 28.

*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to
all the Flock over which the Holy Ghost
has made you Overseers, to feed the Church
of God.*



B EING to preach before you,
Right Reverend Fathers and Re-
verend Brethren, I was in great
and frequent Dispute with my-
self what to produce which might
be worthy of your Expectation, of the Pro-
vince assigned me, or of this so large a Con-
gregation.

D

If

If I had chosen to have drawn my Subject Matter from the Grounds and Reasons of this approaching Convocation's being instituted, many Heads of Discourse would have occurred to me very suitable to Persons meeting together in order for things of a serious and sacred Nature being submitted to their Consideration : But as we are all severally engaged in a more lasting and peculiar Duty ; some as Governors, and others as Ministers in the Church of *Christ* ; it seemed more eligible to me at present to speak of the Things most suitable to that our Duty which it is incumbent on us to practise in every part of Life, than of such as relate to that Duty, required of us only in Convocation, and which is to be a Business of a very short Continuance. For we who are this Day here convened, agreeable to the ancient Custom of the Church, having long ago been made Overseers in sacred Concerns, were not ordained for the Business of one or other particular Term of Time ; nor ought we (like traveling Strangers) to look on whatever occurs with a Mind void of Curiosity ; but we are such as have engaged and promised (lest we might have been led to imagine ourselves not under a strict Obligation thereunto for ever) diligently to apply to this our Function to the last Period of Life ; from the Accomplishment of which we are so far from being restrained by either Law or Authority, that we
are

are instigated to the Discharge of it in the strictest Manner, by several Laws exhorting to and enjoining the same.

My present Business, then, is from these Words of St. *Paul* to the *Ephesian Presbyters*, to discourse of the Sacerdotal Offices, and to animadvert upon those Vices introduced amongst us which are repugnant to them.

The whole of the following Discourse shall be divided into three Parts ; the first of which shall mark out to you, who and what sort of Persons those are of whom the Apostle is in this Place speaking ; namely, that they are those *whom the Holy Ghost had made Overseers*.

The second Part shall exhibit the End to which their whole Office is to be directed--*to feed the Church of God*.

And the third shall point out the Way which it is necessary for such sacred Pastors to walk in for the Attainment of that End ; namely, by *taking heed to themselves and to all their Flock*.

These, it may be perhaps said, are vulgar Topics, already often enough heard, and sufficiently understood by every one. I acknowledge it ; but as they are *proper* at all times, they are highly *necessary* in these, when many slip and fail so in this sacred Course of Life, that it appears far more profitable † never to

† De Rebus tam male neglectis nunquam esse *silendum*, quam de tam probe cognitis nunquam *dicendum*. *A beautiful Antithesis truly !*

be silent with regard to what is so vitiously neglected, than never to discourse upon what is so well known.

First then, I am to shew, who, and what sort of Persons those are of whom the Apostle makes mention : They are those *whom the Holy Ghost had made, Episcopos, Overseers over the Christian Flock.* But who are these *Episcopi*, Bishops, or Overseers as our *English Translation* has it? No other, as is very apparent, than *Presbyters*. For in the seventeenth Verse of this Chapter, *St. Paul* is said, when he was at *Miletus*, to have sent for the *Presbyters, Presbyteros*, or, as our Translation has it, the *Elders of the Church of Ephesus*, and to have made this long Discourse to them : The same Persons therefore whom he in the Text stiles *Episcopos*, Bishops or Overseers, the sacred Historian *St. Luke* calls *Presbyteros*, *Presbyters*, or *Elders*. We have likewise *St. Paul's* own Opinion in this Case ; who when in the 5th Verse of the first Chapter of his Epistle to *Titus* he had said, *For this Cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain Presbyteros, Presbyters or Elders in every City* ; and had told him what Sort of Persons, and of what Morals they ought to be, he adds, speaking of the same Set of Men, *Oportet enim Episcopum omni culpâ carere. A Bishop must be blameless.*

But I will make use of another Evidence in the same Cause, that it may be manifest to every

every one, that not only St. *Paul*, but others of the Apostles were wont to make use of the same Form of Expression; for when St. *Peter* was writing to the Strangers that were scattered throughout Pontus, &c. and was exhorting the *Presbyteros*, Presbyters or Elders amongst them, to feed the Flock of God, he subjoins these Words, *Episcopantes non ex necessitate, sed ex voluntate*. Episcopising, or taking the Oversight thereof, not by Constraint but willingly. Hence it plainly appears, that even this Apostle too looked upon those *Presbyteros* as the same with Bishops, to whom he recommended the *Episcopacy* of the Christian Flock.

Is there nothing then in the sacred Writings concerning that *superior* Order of Men which every succeeding Age has given the Name of *Episcopal* to? Nothing of Their Appointment, to whom it should be customary to commit the Care not of the Flock only, but of the *Presbyters* likewise that instruct the Flock? Truly to me it appears far otherwise; for tho' what I have said above seems to be nothing more than Truth, yet I won't allow that the whole Truth is contained therein. For why? Suppose that that higher Degree of Prelates cannot be found in the New Covenant under the Denomination of Bishops, yet if the Thing itself be found there, if the Order may from thence be discovered, it is sufficient to the Question in Hand. That this should be proved

ed from the Word *Episcopus*, or Bishop, ought not to be demanded ; for it is the Business of a mean Genius to dispute about Words, and of a wicked one to raise Diffensions in the Church from such trifling Contests.

That is more truly said, and more to the Purpose, that St. *Paul*, as I observed before, had in his Epistle to *Titus* affirmed, that *for this Cause he had left him in Crete, that he should ordain Elders, or Presbyters, in every City.* In like manner the same Apostle, in his Epistle to *Timothy*, admonished his beloved Disciple to *lay Hands suddenly on no Man.* Now it is manifest enough, that there were more *Epheſian* Elders, or Presbyters, at that Time ; why then should St. *Paul* give this Injunction to *Timothy* only, if he had not raised him to a different and higher Rank than what was granted to the rest of the Presbyters ?

We read likewise, that both to him, and *Titus*, a Power was given of excluding evil Persons from the Communion of the Church ; of inspecting into the Morals of the Presbyters, of taking Cognisance of those against whom Accusations were brought ; and lastly, of taking Care that a Provision should be appointed every one in Proportion to their Merit. To any one then in Possession of these various Powers, what was wanting pray of the Authority which Bishops have at present over their Clergy ? Nor is it a slight Argument to me, that St. *Paul* never gave any
express

express Directions concerning what kind of Persons should be elected Presbyters, or what Qualifications should be required of them, but in those Epistles alone which he wrote to *Timothy* and *Titus*. Now these Directions were as necessary in all other Churches as in those of *Ephesus* and *Crete*; 'tis therefore reasonable to believe that they were particularly given to these two Persons, on account of their having so great an Authority over the rest of the Presbyters, as enabled them sufficiently to provide, that nothing should be neglected which concerned the Discipline of the Church.

Let us then make an unprejudiced Use of our Judgments in this Case, and acknowledge that *Timothy* and *Titus* were by *St. Paul*, and other Persons by other Apostles, honoured with that Rank which is now called Episcopal, and that agreeable thereunto, the Order of Prelates was in the succeeding Times justly introduced into the rest of the Provinces, who almost ever since the Apostle's Times have had the Name of Bishops [*Episcoporum*] appropriated to themselves, which before the full Establishment of the Christian Republick was given to the Clergy or Presbyters in general.

But it is time now that I should proceed to speak of the second thing proposed, namely, the End to which all the Offices of a Christian Priest should be directed, namely, *to feed the Church of God*.

Now

Now this End is accomplished, if our Flocks are thoroughly instructed in all the Principles of the Christian Religion ; if those things particularly which may be the most useful and expedient are not only delivered to them, but strongly inculcated likewise ; and lastly, if we labour to see them so establish'd in Life and Manners, as that nothing may appear in them misbecoming those who profess the Name of *Christ*.

1. It is our Duty therefore in the first Place, to take care that those over whom we are appointed Teachers be sufficiently instructed in every Principle of the Christian Religion. I must confess that the Apostles sometimes made a kind of Distinction of Doctrines : Hence, what is said of *Foundations, and a building up, of Beginnings, and Perfection, of Milk for the Babes in Christ, and of more solid Food* provided for the stronger.

Nor was this Distinction of Doctrines without its proper Use at that Time, for the first Christians had but been lately brought over from the Errors either of the *Jews* or *Gentiles* ; they were therefore to be untaught many Things, and many Seeds of Superstition were to be rooted out, which long Habit and Custom had strongly implanted in them. The Minds of such Persons would have been apt, like Vessels of a narrow Mouth, to have thrown back whatever should have been poured into them in too great a Quantity, when yet they might at length be filled with a true Knowledge,
by

by the Doctrines of the Christian Faith being instilled into them by Degrees, the more easy first, then the more difficult, and so on.

But We are not at Liberty to proceed in this Manner, seeing we have a quite different Set of Persons to deal with : Our Auditors from their very Infancy have entirely dedicated themselves to *Christ*, and have, without the least Repugnancy thought that they were to believe every thing contained in the sacred Writings : To such as these, therefore another Manner of Instruction is proper : To these *all the Counsel of God is to be declared*, as *St. Paul* says he had done to the *Ephesian Presbyters*, who were more perfect Men.

Let us see then if we sufficiently discharge our Duty by preaching up Benevolence, Justice, Temperance, Gratitude, and the like, in such a Manner, as if these were the only Subjects we had for our Discourses. It is the Practice of some Persons to dwell continually upon these Things, who draw their Doctrines more from the *Greek and Roman Philosophers* than from the Scriptures ; and who furnish out their Sermons in such a Manner, and with such Arguments, that you would imagine you were hearing a *Crysippus* or *Panetius* only. It is the Business indeed of a Christian Interpreter not to neglect such Particulars as these, on all of which Religion lays a great stress ; but those Things which relate to Faith ought most frequently to be infused into the Ears, or ra-

E

ther

ther imprinted on the Minds of the Audience ; as, that Immortality was brought to light thro' the Gospel, and that this proceeded from the Benevolence of the divine Being ; that we are to be justified by Faith in *Christ*, productive of good Works ; that *Christ* made Satisfaction to a provoked Deity for us with his own Blood ; that this Sacrifice may avail all Persons in all Nations ; and that the heavenly Grace promised to Christians, is like precious Furniture in the House of the Faithful. To these Doctrines ought to be added those sacred Mysteries of the Trinity, Incarnation, and the miraculous Conjunction of two Natures in *Christ*. When I hear any one preaching these, and such like Doctrines which greatly distinguish the Christian Pastor from the Man, whose sole Rule of Life is Reason, I readily acknowledge him to be a true Expounder of the Gospel : To one delivering such wholesome Doctrines, and establishing Truth by the strongest Arguments, all Men will attend, and yield their Assent.

2. In the mean time, we must remember frequently to inculcate such Doctrines as may appear to be the most useful and expedient. Concerning these every Man's Prudence must direct him : for as the same Culture is not proper for every Soil, so the same Seed is not always to be sown in every Church. We see some Men more inclined to some particular Vices and Errors than to others ; there

is a wide Difference whether our Flocks are placed in the Country, or in this populous and busy City ; as likewise in that Part of the Town which is chiefly inhabited by Artificers and Traders, or in that Part of it where Pleasure is the principal Pursuit. From all of these no one Truth ought to be concealed ; but then some are more proper to be frequently repeated, according to the Difference of the Audience, than others. What was the Reason, think you, that St. *Paul* insisted so much upon Justification by Faith, but Saint *James* as much upon the same by Works ? They both saw the Truth clearly alike, but they endeavoured to accommodate their Discourses for the Advantages of those to whom they were delivered.

Nor must we consider alone what Doctrines are proper to our respective Audiences, but what appear so with Regard to the Times. We happen, as God in his infinite Wisdom thought fit, to live in an Age wherein the Christian Faith is by many esteemed Superstition, wherein some are pleased to think that they can and ought to form their Lives by the Guidance of Nature and Reason alone. Now how are we to act in this Case ? In order to bring back these evil Thinkers, must not we ourselves as it were go beyond the Bounds ? Is it not necessary, in order for the Entrance of Faith into the narrow Minds of such Gainfayers, to circumscribe it within straiter Bounds ? That

the Christian Doctrines may not displease these People, ought they not to have a different Face from their own put upon them? Why else do I hear some explaining the divine Nature of Christ in such a Manner, as that the same might be almost said to be in any Angel? Why else do I hear others acknowledging that nothing can be true which is not demonstrable by human Knowledge: That Reason is sufficient to instruct us in our whole Duty: That it is possible Hell Torments may not be eternal; and that a Man who had been a grievous Sinner in Life might appease the Wrath of an offended God, without the Interposition of one to make Expiation for him?

They are greatly mistaken, in my Opinion, who think Infidels are to be reclaimed by such Methods. What these Men thus so prodigally give up, is conferred on the Ungrateful, who endeavour to make their own Advantage of it, and look upon all these Concessions made them, as gained in War, being never the more docile or attentive to those Things which are proved by Arguments.

3. It remains to speak of the third Kind of the sacerdotal Function, and which is by far the most difficult of all; for we must labour, that those who are under our Care, be so established in Life and Manners, as that nothing may appear in them misbecoming those who profess the Name of Christ.
To

To this End every Gospel Doctrine has an Eye ; and all that part of Science which deserves to be called the *Food of the Mind*.

But, alas ! how often do we find all our Pains in this part of our Duty fruitless ? The Reason of which is obvious ; for as it principally depends upon us, that our Flocks should be sufficiently perfected in the scientific part of Divinity, so it depends upon themselves not to offend in their Morals, and the Conduct of their Lives : All Men, as they enjoy Free-will, are severally driven on by their own Lusts ; and there is no Eloquence or Prudence whatever that can restrain, as it were with a Bridle, all the Pupils of a vicious Age. The Apostle St. *Paul*, who was inferior to no one in the Art of Persuasion, says, that *Demas had forsaken him, having loved this present World*. Ananias dared to lie to the *Holy Ghost*, in the Presence of St. *Peter*, attending the Business of the Gospel ; and the celebrated *Simon Magus* is said to be entangled in the *Bond of Iniquity*, after having heard the same Apostle. Is nothing then to be expected from us, but that we earnestly persuade all Men in general ? I own, every Method ought to be tried, and should our Endeavours in this Respect frequently or generally fail of Success, yet we must still consider it as a Part of our Duty. But that it may be brought to a happier Issue, let us see in the third Place,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, What Way it is necessary Christian Pastors should walk in, for the Attainment of that End, namely, by *taking heed to themselves, and to all their Flock.*

This is to be effected by several Means, especially Three ; for it is not necessary to my present Purpose to enumerate all ; He then will best attain this End, who takes care to reside with his Flock, to employ himself entirely in his own Function, and lastly, to be himself an Example to them of Sanctity of Manners, and Innocency of Life ; each of which Particulars I shall briefly speak to.

I am not ignorant of what both may be, and commonly is said for Non-Residents ; for Instance, that there are many Benefices, as they are called, which won't even furnish the common Necessaries of Life to those who hold them ; that there are many Parishes so thinly inhabited, that two in the same Neighbourhood may, without any Inconveniency, be entrusted to the Care of one Person ; that these additional Recompenses were very justly proposed to us, in order to our making a greater Progress in Learning ; that the Laws moreover, and the Example of Men, even remarkable for Piety, favoured this Practice ; and that therefore, from the Necessity of the Case, every Person should not be branded with a Mark either of Negligence or Perfidy, on Account of his Non-Residence. Nor am I one of those who don't think some Allowance ought to be made in
hard

hard Cases ; but we must take care lest that Excuse should prevail where the Reasons above-mentioned cannot be urged. For how comes it to pass, or by what Indulgence is it permitted, that any one should entirely, or for the most part absent himself from his Parish, which both affords him a liberal Income, and is well stocked with Inhabitants at the same Time? And yet this is what we sometimes meet with. Whence these *sine-cure Embassies*, as we may call them, given to him, to whom the Care, not only of one, but two Benefices is intrusted? Who is not absent in order to take care of his necessary Affairs ; but either out of Sloth, to consult his own Ease, or out of Ambition to frequent the Houses of the Great.

In the mean time let this pernicious Set of Men consider, that their Absence is frequently the Cause of the Income of their Benefices being very much diminished, of their uninhabited Houses suffering great Dilapidations, of their Parishioners having no good Examples in, nor meeting with any Hospitality from those to whose Support they so largely contribute ; and, lastly, that they are guilty of the Breach of those Promises, (whether perfidiously or inadvertently, I won't say) which every one of them religiously made to his respective Bishop upon his being initiated into the Priesthood. I must confess indeed, that if we examine all the Precepts of the
holy

holy Apostles relating to the Manners of Presbyters, we shall find nothing in them literally opposite to this Evil; neither was there any Law amongst the antient *Romans* against Parricides. The same Reason may be given for both, because in those Times of greater Purity there was not even a bare Suspicion of any One's running such Lengths as to merit being branded for either of these Crimes. But, O foul and shameful Fact! what former Ages neither saw, nor could suspect, we find introduced and practised amongst us: I say, *Amongst us*; for the purer Churches abroad are yet free from this Blemish; nay, even among the Roman Catholicks this Non-resident Tribe are, it is said, very rare: So that if we were to consider them not with regard to what they believe, but to the Diligence with which they look after their Flocks, we should think that they were the Reformed at present, and our Reformation was still to come.

2. But if there be any One who resides in his Parish, and does it from a Consciouſness of Duty, it is farther necessary for him to employ himself entirely in his sacred Function, remembering always that his Life and Manners ought to be formed and directed after the Example of the Apostles and primitive Presbyters. Such a Man therefore, must renounce all those Pleasures which are either dishonest, or may prevent him from fulfilling the great Work of his Function. We read that some were noted
by

by St. *Paul* in his Time, *who were lovers of Pleasure more than lovers of God.*

The same Thing may be said of all those, who easily suffer themselves for the sake of Pleasure to be taken off from the Discharge of their holy Offices; for it is very wrong, if any imagine that to be all vacant Time, which may be pilfered, as it were, from the Omision of publick Prayers, or the less solemn Performance of them, or from a Neglect of the other Parts of their Duty.

We must farther beware of indulging in such Pleasures, as, tho' innocent in themselves, yet are such as an Interpreter of the Divine Law cannot, consistent with his Gravity, be present at. We should none of us be given to Hunting, or to Horse-racing, or to the frequenting of Play-houses, or Musick Meetings; nor ought we to be often seen at Taverns, or in any of those Places which are as Temples dedicated to Pleasure of any Kind. But if we must take a lawful Pleasure sometimes, two Things are strictly to be observed therein, one of which is, that its only End be to relax the Mind from an Intensity of Thought; the other, that there be a Mean preserved in the Enjoyment of it, and a more strict one too than what may be allowed other People. But if any will take my Advice, let them manage Things so in this Case, that they may not appear to have sought after or

F

volunta-

voluntarily embraced any Pleasure, but to have rather fallen upon it fortuitously and by chance.

In the mean time there are some who, though not allured by any Enticements of Pleasures, yet are very guilty in suffering themselves to be called off from their sacred Employment, by engaging in civil Matters. There may be sometimes indeed an Excuse for this; but there is very seldom such a one made for it, as good Men will allow of.

As often as I reflect upon the Importance of our Duty, as set forth in holy Writ; in how solemn a Manner we all promise at our Ordination, *to lay aside all the Study of the World*, I can by no means approve either of those who patiently endure being much entangled in foreign Matters, or those who voluntarily engage never so little in them. And I wish it were lawful for us in great Parishes to account every thing foreign to us, which had not some Agreement with the Salvation of Souls.

Let us attend to St. Paul, when he says to Timothy, * *that no Man that warreth entangleth himself with the Affairs of this Life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a Soldier.* Let us remember likewise what the twelve Apostles thought of the taking care of the daily Ministration to Widows; *It is not reason, say they, that we should leave*

* 2 Tim. ii. 4.

the Word of God to serve Tables. Know that this is more properly said to Thee, who, having a Church committed to thy Care, neglecting thy proper and more excellent Business, engagest in any other Art or Science for the Sake of Lucre, or dost chiefly employ thyself in such Affairs as may gain the Favour of the Powerful and Wealthy.

We have the same Appetites and Passions with other Men : These ought to be kept in Subjection to Reason, towards the doing of which, those who engage in only divine Matters have no small Assistance ; but when we launch out of our sacred and quiet Port, we are tossed in an Ocean of most turbulent Tempests. Many things necessarily occur to us, which have the Power of whetting us with Anger, torturing us with Envy, or inflaming us with Hopes and Desires. We must suffer many Things which are not quite agreeable to our own Opinion, and must do many Things which are not so to the Opinion of others. Hence come Offences, Contentions, Hatred, and the like ; from which he who is most free is accounted both the wisest and best Man. Whence it is manifest how prudent it is to avoid, as much as possible, being engaged in civil Matters, lest those Perturbations be excited in ourselves, which it is the great Business of our Doctrine to appease in others.

All Pleasures then being renounced, and these foreign Employments set aside, the Christian Priest is at Liberty to discharge his own Duty; a Task sufficiently great, and not to be executed without the greatest Effort of Mind. It is His to console the Afflicted, to raise the Depressed, to give the Assistance of his Prayers to the Sick, and to prevail on them, when recovered, to return their Thanks to Heaven for the same, and to lead a better Life for the future: It is His, earnestly to exhort to the Practice of every Virtue, and sharply to rebuke every Vice; to point out the Path of Salvation to the Erroneous, and to display, as it were, the Light of Doctrine to the Dubious and Ignorant.

Whatever Time remains to him after the Discharge of these many and great Parochial Duties, ought to be so taken up in the Study of Divinity, that the Mind should seldom have room to be either unemployed, or to be turned upon other Things: For we ought to be thoroughly acquainted with all the Articles of the Christian Faith; to comprehend on what Foundation each relies, what Connection it has with others, and by what Arguments it is established.

The *Knowledge* then of these Things, which, as the Prophet says, *The Priest's Lips should keep*, is to be sought for in the sacred Writings, and at the same Time those are not to be neglected which were produced in the
succeeding

ſucceeding Age to theſe. But let no one think it ſufficient to addict himſelf intirely to the reading of the beſt Writers of any modern Church (even *Tillotſon* himſelf not excepted, whom I look on as inferior to none but the Divine) nor to rely on the Judgment of the moſt learned, when he may have every thing he wants from the great Original itſelf.

Not at the Fountain-Head are ſweeter Waters drank, not from the Rays of the Sun doth a purer Fire emanate, than do the true Principles of the Chriſtian Religion flow from the Books of Holy Scripture. Theſe then our principal Care is to be laid out upon ; Theſe let us ſtudiouſly read, and let every one know that he has made a very great Progreſs in the Acquirement of true Wiſdom, who takes Pleaſure in peruſing thoſe divine Writers. But it is a Work of great Labour to be thoroughly acquainted with them, therefore many fly it, and think it ſufficient to inſpect the Writings of modern Divines, either for their Imitation, or for the fixing of their Opinions. What I here ſay I would have underſtood to be meant of Men of Learning, and thoſe who are not greatly engaged in parochial Duties. To others, perhaps, Allowance is to be made, if they are ignorant of ſome Particulars ; but not ſo to thoſe who are ſufficiently learned in other Things, and have Time enough upon their Hands ; who, if they are ignorant of the Holy Scriptures, may by being thus unſkilled
in

in their own Art, be compared with such as are Strangers in their own House.

But this is not all. If we would *feed the Church of God*, we must farther take Care to be Holy ourselves in Life and Manners. There are many Things that occur in the Scriptures, concerning the Guardians of the Christian Flock, which relate to this part of our Duty. It is required that they be Men of *good Morals*, of a *meek and quiet Temper*, adorned with *Gravity*, and lastly, that they be *blameless* in every Respect. Nay, even this is not sufficient to those who bear the sacred Character, it being held necessary, that they should *have good Report of them which are without*.

These are St. Paul's Injunctions to *Timothy*; to which he adds, *If a Man know not how to rule his own House, how shall he take Care of the Church of God?* Which can much less be expected of him, who cannot rule himself, and whose Morals are the Reverse of his Doctrines.

Nor does Reason dictate any Thing different from these Precepts of the Holy Apostles; for what can be more base or absurd than to live in one manner, and profess that we ought to live in another? As if nothing at all was to be attributed to that Science which we are desirous should be so honourably thought of and spoke of by every one. This is a Conduct scandalous in a common Person, in a Man of Learning, flagitious; but in a Divine, what Name

Name can it be branded with that is black enough ? For if a Man who is a Soldier by Profession, is found slack or timorous in Battle; or if one who would be thought a Lawyer, should hesitate or appear ignorant in that Science, even when his own Affairs are in Question; this is the more shameful, because he fails and blunders in his own peculiar Art ; so a Divine who offends in his Morals, is so much the less excusable, as he plainly appears ignorant and unpractised in that very Art of Life which he pretends to be a Tutor in.

But lest any one may think that it is not altogether necessary these Things should be said, he may look round a little, and see how many are set over both Country and City Parishes, who are infected in some Degree or other with the Vices of the Age. I will freely speak what I think, without either Calumny or Flattery : I say then that there are, amongst us, Those who are led away by the Splendor of Honours, who are allur'd by Pleasures, who study too much the Conveniencies of Life, in whose Breasts dwell Wrath, Envy, Discord, Hatred, and other such like Vices, as ought not to be permitted even to approach the Door of a heavenly Mind.

What shall I say of the Appearance of Sanctity which ought to be preserved by us in our Words, Actions, Countenance, nay in the very Gestures of our Bodies ? In how many do we in vain look for, in how few do we find
those

those external Indications of a pure and pious Breast, which are so highly commendable in a Christian Priest! O! how ashamed am I to confess (but how much more shameful would it be to deny it) that there are some who take our sacred Order upon them against their own Inclinations as it were, either compelled thereunto by the Authority of their Parents, or induced to it from a Prospect of Advantage; and that there are others who are greatly suspected to have obtained Benefices for themselves by Money, and other ill Practices! It is such Men as these who are principally concerned in bringing bad Morals into the Church; of their Number are those who give themselves up as Slaves to Lust and Pleasure, who are such a Disgrace to us, that they are never named by any one, but in order for some remarkable Instance of Vice being produced in them.

There was, there was a Time (which I as much despair of ever seeing the Return of, as I long for it) when the Manners of a Christian Pastor were the best Explanation of his Doctrine; when it would have appeared as a Prodigy for one who had undertaken to teach the true way of Life, to fail in it himself; when it was criminal even to be suspected of a Crime. But those happier Times are past: Another Age is sprung up, and other Manners. Now, not to mention the Bad, we who are, in our own Opinion, good, think it, for the generality,

generality, enough, not to prove the worst Examples, no Matter whether we prove the best or not.

In the mean Time, whilst grievous Complaints are made by us of the Number of Infidels daily increasing, we are still calling Heaven and Earth to witness, that there was never a Time when stronger Arguments were produced in Defence of the Christian Religion, or were more clearly propounded. That this is true I readily acknowledge ; and it is as true that many Reasons may be assigned, (of which the general Depravity in Manners is not the least) why those Principles of Faith don't appear sufficiently demonstrable to some Persons of the present Age, which were deemed of old to be established by the strongest Reasons. But I think it must be confessed, that the Root of this Evil in great Measure springs from the Manners of the Clergy ; and that the Enemies of our Faith are therefore more difficult to be brought over to what we say ought to be believed, because they are too attentive to what we practise.

For why ? What Argument can have its proper Force, when a vicious Priest is pleading in Defence of the Christian Cause ? Neither the Holy Gospels, nor the Epistles, nor the History of the Acts of the Apostles, nor profane History agreeing therewith, can serve for a sufficient Proof, when such a one undertakes to patronize the Truth. He is an Enemy to
G the

the best Cause in the World, being so much the less believed, as he is esteemed less Holy. If you look on him, he appears to be one of our Host ; if you look at his Manners, he appears to war in the Enemies Army ; for he administers Darts to those who bear Arms against us, and who have hitherto shewn themselves invincible, not so much from their own Strength, as from our Weakness ; not so much from their own Reasonings, as from our Vices.

These are the Things which I had to speak to upon this Occasion, and which I have done more freely perhaps than will be agreeable to those whom this Discourse may have set a Mark upon ; but I hope I shall be readily pardoned by you who are here present.

If there be no one who is more ashamed than myself, that these Crimes can be objected to us, and that we cannot clear ourselves of them ; if, we are to follow that apostolical Precept which enjoins Christian Interpreters to be *instant*, and strive by Word both *in season*, and *out of season* : If, it is not possible for any one ever to meet with a more seasonable Time than he hath, who has an Opportunity of saying these Things in a large Assembly of Men, which it principally concerns them to hear ; those Things likewise which because not so right in some amongst them, are charged as a Crime upon all the rest of them, I must intreat and even beg of my Hearers,

Hearers, to take that in good part, which I have said with a benevolent Intention, although with a little more Freedom of Speech than usual; which I confess I did the more gladly, as there is One present, that ought to be greatly revered by you all, and by me to be beloved likewise, who hath both in his Life and Writings pursued those Virtues of the sacred Function, of which I have been speaking, from his very Youth up until now; who hath made it manifest to us, that it is possible in the most iniquitous Times for a Man to rise to the highest Dignity in the Church, who was never in one Instance wanting to his Duty.

Admonished, therefore, by his Example, I at length, Right Reverend Fathers, address my Discourse to You; nor let me be thought unmindful either of your Dignity or my own Humbleness, if I say that the Remedy for these many and great Evils is to be sought for from you. Almost all Men think this, who are not ignorant, at the same Time, how difficult a Task it is to raise the languishing Discipline of the Church; what a Labour to reform a long-establish'd Custom. They are not ignorant how many Criminals would fall under your Notice, some of whom are Men of Weight and Distinction in Life, some of whom would be skreen'd either by a too crafty Interpretation of the Law, or by the ill-judged Compassion of their Friends, or by the Favour

of some Men in Power whom they are subservient to, or by (that Pest of all Discipline) the Pretence of studying those Parts which they had taken upon them in civil Affairs.

It is the Business however of your Prudence wisely to obviate these Difficulties, and of your Fortitude courageously to overcome them. If with one Consent and one Might ye undertake that Work ; if in the Execution of it ye have no Regard of Persons ; if ye persevere firm and constant in this Affair ; if to the Severity of Advice ye join Gentleness of Discourse, and an Intimation of the Reasons of your Conduct ; if, lastly, which is the best Caution and Provision against these Evils, ye diligently take care that no Person be admitted into any holy Order, whose Morals are either known to be bad, or not to be manifestly good, it is the Opinion of many that, with the Assistance of God, and the Favour of all good Men, your accomplishing every Thing of this Kind, which is within the Compass of the Law, is not to be despaired of.

This Religion, This the Nature of your Station, This the Church of *England*, almost undermined by the Manners of its Clergy, certainly demands, that you should try what both your Admonitions and Injunctions may be able to effect ; and that if you cannot entirely remove every thing which is amiss, yet that the Offenders may be made to know that they

they are secure, not from the over Indulgence of their Bishops, but from the too great License of a corrupt Age.

I exhort and beseech you then (for to ye, my beloved Brethen, I once more address myself, being about to conclude) to let the Things I have been insisting on be imprinted on your Minds. I think I have fully explained who and what sort of Persons we are, what an arduous and sacred Work we have undertaken, and by what Way and Method it is to be accomplished.

If we diligently and entirely apply ourselves to this, we may wisely glory in the Title of Christian Priests; but if inflamed with the Love of the present World, and not adorning our excellent State of Life with excellent Manners, we either give up ourselves thro' Ambition to Honours, or thro' Avarice to Pelf, or thro' Love of Ease and Indulgence to the Pleasures and Recreations of Body and Mind; worse Counsel could not have been devised by the worst of Men.

We must become infamous to all good Men, and the Derision of Infidels; we must endure the bitter Remorse and Stings of Conscience, and be under an Apprehension of even present Punishment, if the ancient Discipline of the Church should ever recover its former Honour. But if none of these were to attend us, yet we have cause to fear God's being mindful of all that may ensue from such bad Example.
Be

Be assured, that he will enquire on the solemn Day of Judgment, with what Diligence we instructed our Flocks, and what abundant Fruits our Labours produced.

O happy Those who shall then be able truly to affirm, *that they had held the Mystery of the Faith in a pure Conscience, that they had fought a good Fight, that they had faithfully done the Work of an Evangelist, and made full Proof of their sacred Ministry!*

These will at last hear that most joyful of all Sentences, *Well done, ye good and faithful Servants, enter ye into the Joy of your Lord.*

Which may God to grant to us for the Sake of his beloved Son, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be Glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S.



